MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

SERIES IV
NUMBER ONE
FEBRUARY 27, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN
CHICAGO

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

The Museum welcomes you to its Spring Course of Entertainments for Children. It is hoped that you will enjoy every one.

D. C. DAVIES, Director.

When Columbus crossed the ocean in seareh of the Spice Islands, his men were continually beset by fear of sea-monsters. They had, without doubt, seen whales stranded on the sea shore. Perhaps they had even aided in the whale "fishing" whieh was carried on from European eoasts as early as the year 1000; and they probably reasoned that sinee they had seen sea animals as largc as whales, there must be mueh larger and more feroeious ones still to be diseovered.

As a matter of fact, no animals larger than whales could havc been discovered if the sailors had searehed every eorner of the sea; for even today, certain whales remain the largest of our beasts. Not all whales are large however. They range all the way from four feet in length to eighty-five feet.

All whales are fish-like in form—shaped to move easily and quickly through the water. Their paddles, placed on each side near the front of the body remind us a little of a fish's side fins; and some whales actually have a fish-like fin on top of their back. The whale's strong tail, too, looks somewhat like that of a fish. It is little wonder that the people of Columbus's time thought whales were gigantie fish.

We know, of course, that whales are mammals—that they are warm-blooded air-breathers who nourish their young with milk just as cows do. Inside thc fin-like flippers are upper-arm, lower-arm, wrist and finger bones. The great ribs protect mighty lungs; and the blow-holes on top of the whale's head serve him as nostrils. Even the tail is the sort that an air-breathing animal should have. A fish's tail-fins are plaeed parallel to his flat body to help him swim forward The whale's tail flukes are at right angles to his body line. If he must rise to the surfaee suddenly for air, he has only to make a few strong downward strokes and he shoots immediately upward. The whale swims with his tail. He uses his paddles only as balancers.

Long ago, whales are supposed to have been four-legged land animals. For some reason, they began to live in the water; and, as their tails became larger and stronger, their hind legs became smaller and weaker. Finally they disappeared entirely from the exterior of the body; and now only a few separate bones and pieces of gristle are left, hidden in the flesh, to tell us that hind legs once were present.

The Right Whale, whose skeleton you can see in Hall 17, got his name in a strange fashion. Men who went out to hunt him were interested chiefly in his whalebone and in the oil whieh could be extracted from the thick layer of fat or blubber whieh lay just beneath his skin. Sometimes, by mistake, they killed a different kind of whale. It gave little oil and often no whalebone at all; so, gradually, men who could tell the whales apart joined the hunt and pointed out the proper whales to the hunters. They would call, "There's the right whale to kill"; and gradually the big fellow became known as the Right Whale.

An extremely large Right Whale will give as mueh as 250 barrels of oil. It was used, formerly, as fuel for house lamps and strect lights. Many public buildings in the days of the American Revolution were lighted by a gas made from it; but after mineral oils beeame common, its use practieally ceased. Whalebone or baleen was obtained from the whale's mouth. When the whale picked up a mouthful of the small sea-animals on which he fed, he usually gulped in a great deal of water. The fringe of baleen acted as a strainer to keep the food in the whale's mouth when it raised its tongue and foreed the water out. Men found the horny strips of whalebone useful in stiffening garments, making ribs for umbrellas and manufacturing ornaments of diffcrent kinds. There is no whalcbone present in the Museum's Right Whale skeleton.

The first whales used by men were those stranded on the eoast by storms. Later they began to hunt them from the shore. A whale was sighted by the "spout" of his steaming breath blown upwards when he eame to the surfacc for air. Men in small boats were sent out to harpoon and bring him in; and often the boats were sunk by the lashing of the whale's tail in his efforts to free himself. Still later, when whales grew scarce along the eoast, large sailing vessels were manned and sent out on hunts which often lasted several years. These ships were equipped with furnaces and boilers for trying out the whale's fat; and they did not sail home until every barrel on board was filled with oil.

Other members of the whale group whose skeletons are to be found in Hall 17, are the Bottle-nose, the White Whale, the Dolphin, and Porpoise; and at the west end of the hall is the jaw-bone of a Sperm Whale.

Dorothy Cockrell, Guide-leeturer.

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FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

When Europeans first came to America they found traces of Indian tribes which had, even then, disappeared. This story tells you of some of them.

D. C. Davies, Director.

CLIFF-DWELLERS

In the famous age of diseovery, 15–17th eenturies, men were eager to go on long voyages, exploring strange lands and diseovering hidden treasure; and when they returned they told about the wonderful things they had found and the queer people they had seen. Columbus, you remember, made a great voyage of diseovery in 1492. That started the Spaniards on their conquests, whieh began as search for gold and treasure and resulted, among other things, in the discovery of an ancient raee of people who onee lived in the canyon country of southwestern North Ameriea.

The Spanish had a tradition that long ago a eertain white man and his followers had left Europe and ventured far out on the Sea of Darkness. Somewhere on his voyage he diseovered land; and the story was told that he had founded seven eities in a eountry whieh nobody had ever seen. A long time afterward, when the Spanish had landed in Mexieo, one of them was sent to explore the regions now known as New Mexieo and Arizona. There he discovered what he believed to be the seven lost cities founded years ago,—so people said,—out beyond the Sea of Darkness.

In reality, the Spanish explorer had seen the pueblos of the Zuni Indian tribe, houses built of mud and stone on high roeky mesas or tablelands. If he had gone just a little farther he would have diseovered similar stone houses built in the sides of great eliffs. The eliff dwellings, however, had even at that time fallen into ruins; and were deserted except for a few skeletons and mummies. These were hidden away in the darkest rooms, with some of their elothing, jewelry and dishes.

At the east end of Hall 7 in the Stanley McCormick Collection you will find several models of aneient eliff dwellings. Some of the houses were construeted by hollowing out caves in solid rock. Ruins of this type are called eavate lodges. Often instead of hollowing caves, the cliff dwellers ehose for building sites natural eavities in the eliffs, using the lower inner rock as floor; the upper overhanging rock as roof; and the far inside roek as back wall. Praetieally the whole house was thus ready-made exeept for the front wall. A cliff dwelling never had any back door!

Sometimes the aneient people seemed to prefer living in homes less diffieult to approaeh. On the mesas and in the valleys stand ruins of square flat-roofed houses built close together like the pueblos of modern Hopi Indians. The basis of the cliff dwelling and the pueblo was a single room; but when many single rooms were built elose to each other, some even on top of each other, the village looked somewhat like a group of city apartments.

The eliff dwellers did not leave any written records; and the pueblo tribes living today near the ruined cities ean tell us almost nothing of the lost inhabitants. Who they were; where they came from; why they built their homes up in the cliffs; why they disappeared; and where they went are mysteries even yet. Among eertain pueblo tribes there is a legend that their ancestors had formerly lived in seven eaves. Seientists today think it very probable that the cliff dwellers were elosely related to the modern pueblo Indians. If you compare the cliff ruins in the east end of Hall 7 with the two modern pueblos of Taos and Aeoma next to them; and with two other modern pueblos, Walpi and Hano, in the west end of the same hall, you will see how mueh alike they all are.

Where the cliff dwellers eame from originally nobody really knows. We are sure, however, that they were Indians,—and not the white men who sailed out on the Sea of Darkness. They may have eome up from the south through Mexieo, before the time of the Aztecs; or they may have wandered into the mesa country from the north.

Very likely one of the reasons why so many of them built their homes up in the sides of the eliffs was to gain protection from enemy tribes. The height of a eliff made a good look-out; enemies had to elimb up the steep roeky path single file and thus eould be knoeked off easily; and the hard stone on three sides made a very strong fortress. The cliff dwellings also made good look-outs above the fields of grain and the garden plots whieh the aneient Indians eultivated in the narrow river valleys of the eanyons. It was really easier to build a eliff dwelling than a modern pueblo; for a few partitions and a front wall would eomplete a comfortable house.

Why they left their homes in the eliffs, and where they went after that, are questions whieh many people are trying to answer by studying the country and people of today and the relics and ruins of the past. Probably the cliff dwellers eeased to fear enemies. Sinee it was easier to live nearer the farming land they may have moved into the valleys where they probably mingled with the Indians already living on lower ground, soon losing their identity.

In the pueblo villages of today are many Indian boys and girls whose aneestors more than likely built those strange cliff dwellings which now stand in picturesque ruins throughout the desert lands of the southwest.

MARGARET FISHER, Guide-leeturer.

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Some of the strangest animals in the world live in Australia. The Story for today will tell you about a number of those to be seen in the Museum collections.

D. C. DAVIES, Director.

STRANGE AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS

What is it that has a bill like a duck, and feet like a duck, and lays eggs like a duck and yet isn't a duck? It is the platypus, one of the strange Australian animals, found nowhere else in the world. Scientists have named the platypus, ornithorhynchus; but its common name is duckbill. It is really not a bird at all but a furred animal with habits very much like those of a water-loving mole. It spends practically all of its life swimming and diving; and burrowing into the mud. It digs up worms and shell-fish from the river bottoms; stores them in its cheek pouches; and rises to the surface to eat them while it swims. Nature provided the platypus with a soft and very sensitive bill, well adapted to groping about in mud. Its webbed toes and flat tail make swimming easy, and its velvety fur sheds water.

The Platypus makes a snug nest for its babies just underneath the ground in the bank of a stream. The babies have to stay in the nest until they are able to swim; for the only entrance to their house is through long tunnels in the bank, which finally open under the surface of the water. Unlike any other furred animals except echidnas, the babies of the platypus are hatched from eggs. The eggs are tough and leathery like snake eggs; and the newly-hatched young are small, weak and naked. In the third case at the southeast end of Hall 15 there are two adult duckbills.

The echidna, next to the duckbills in the case, is often called the Australian porcupine because of the quills on its back. When the echidna is afraid, it rolls itself into a spiny ball with head and legs protected. In the mornings and evenings it is busy digging into ant hills with powerful claws and long slender snout. Although echidnas never have any teeth, they manage to gather up quantities of ants with their long sticky tongue. Like the platypus, the echidna lays eggs and its newly-hatched young are helpless; but the echidna spends its life on dry rocky soil instead of in the water.

On the same side of the case with the duckbills and echidnas are some of the largest of Australian wild animals, kangaroos. They look as if they had grown too rapidly; for their hind legs are so much larger than their front legs. They use their clumsy tail like a third hind leg to rest upon when they are sitting. Kangaroos never walk or run but travel swiftly over the plains by great hops or leaps. Their principal food is grass, shrubs and leaves; and their favorite grass is a small spike variety now called the kangaroo grass.

The babies of even the largest kinds of kangaroos are smaller than house mice and are very weak when they are born. The mother kangaroo carries her new-born helpless baby in her pouch, which is a fold of skin on the outside of her body. In that pouch the baby kangaroo lives for several months until it grows strong enough to take care of itself. Even after the young kangaroos have grown almost too big for the pouch, they often seek its protection if they become frightened or weary.

Australians call the baby kangaroo a "joey". Young females are called "flying does"; and the older males "old men". The great red kangaroo of southeastern Australia is noted for its size, strength, speed and endurance. The smaller kangaroos or wallabies furnish most of the kangaroo leather, meat and furs that go to London markets. A kangaroo which differs greatly from the others is the rat kangaroo. It is much smaller, though not nearly so small as a rat; and it runs instead of leaping. Most kangaroos cannot bend their tails easily; but the rat kangaroo wraps its tail around the grasses which it carries thus to its nest.

On the opposite side of the case from the kangaroos, duckbills and echidnas are several other strange Australian animals. Look for a woolly bear-like animal with only one baby on its back. It is these, and not true bears, that teddy bear toys resemble. Koalas, (the real name for these clumsy big-eared creatures), do not belong to the bears but are more closely related to phalangers and wombats. Adult koalas spend much time climbing slowly about in tall eucalyptus trees in search of tender leaves, the food they like best.

The flying phalanger at the upper end of the case looks so much like our flying squirrel that people often call it the squirrel flying phalanger. The skin between the fore leg and the hind leg is extended and catches the air like a parachute. Although phalangers are distantly related to opossums, they really do not deserve that American Indian name; yet they often get it. One great difference between phalangers and opossums is in the number of babies. An opossum mother usually has from six to twelve at a time, while a phalanger has only one or two each year.

Other strange Australian animals are the rabbit bandicoot, the banded marsupial anteater, the wombat and the Tasmanian devil. Look for them in the southeast corner of Hall 15.

MARGARET FISHER, Guide-lecturer.

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SERIES IV

NUMBER FOUR

MARCH 20, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN

CHICAGO

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

When you go about the Museum, you will find the games that children play illustrated in many different collections. Today, the story will introduce you to some of the games played by the children of Japan.

D. C. DAVIES, Director.

THE GAMES OF JAPANESE CHILDREN

Children all over the world play the same kind of games and are amused by similar things. Far on the other side of the globe, little Japanese boys and girls play games which closely resemble the ones that you and your friends play here in Chicago.

In Frank W. Gunsaulus Hall (Hall 30, Second Floor) is a collection of lovely Japanese pictures printed from carved wood blocks. The collection is divided into four sections, only one of which is shown at a time. The one which you will find on exhibition now shows you pictures connected with the New Year's festival and with the games and pastimes of Japanese folk. They were made, many of them, more than a hundred years ago; and they show Japanese people as they were at that time.

Many of our games are played with balls, and so it is also in Japan. The girls are especially good at bouncing balls—sometimes from the ground, sometimes from toe, ankle or knee; and as they bounce them, they turn round and round, counting or repeating rhymes. They play at "Jackstones", using small bags filled with beans or peas instead of little metal "Jacks" like yours; and the boys bat balls about with a long padded bat attached to the end of a string. Battledore and shuttlecock is played with feathered soapberry seeds for shuttlecocks and battle boards beautifully ornamented on their back with pictures painted on padded silk. As in our game, the players try to keep the shuttlecock constantly in air. All of these games, except "Jackstones", may be seen in prints on the south wall.

At the right-hand side of the window are prints which illustrate a game similar to our game of "Authors". Sometimes forty-eight cards are used in playing it, sometimes 360 painted clam shells. On one card or shell is painted a poet's portrait; on another, one of his poems. Several play the game, and the one who matches up the most poems and poets wins.

Many Japanese games are played on boards like those used in our chess and checkers. In a print on the south wall, two children play at "Sixteen Knights". On the opposite wall, a "Go" board is shown. Can you imagine playing a game similar to chess with 180 pawns on a board with 360 squares? Both "Go" and Japanese chess are very difficult games—far more difficult than any of ours.

Japanese boys have always enjoyed walking on stilts; and their stilts seem ever so much taller than ours because the boys are so small. Rope jumping is a boy's game in Japan; and boys often play at tug-of-war with the rope fastened about the neck or waist. You can see stilt walking and a tug-of-war in progress in prints on the north side of the hall.

In various pictures, kites are to be seen—not plain white kites like ours but kites in the shape of birds, animals and all sorts of curious things. Kite flying is the great New Year pastime for the boys. In fact, almost the whole male population of Japan from the little three-year-old to the aged man, fly kites at that time. Some of them are singing or whistling kites. When aloft, the wind, blowing through strips of bamboo attached to them, makes a singing sound. Some are good luck kites, painted with characters meaning "every good wish" and still others are fighting kites. A part of the kite's string is smeared with glue and powdered glass. By careful management, it can be made to cut the string of an opponent's kite.

Like all little girls, Japanese girls enjoy dolls; and many of them have large collections. A print on the north wall shows the common papier-maché and paper dolls with which they play on ordinary days. Their better dolls, like the emperor and empress dolls in the adjoining room, are kept in store rooms on all but three days of the year. Then, on the occasion of the Girls' Festival, the third day of March, the dolls are taken out and placed on low red-covered shelves, and the girls admire them and give tea parties in their honor for three days.

There are many other pastimes enjoyed by boys and girls of old Japan. Additional prints in the Gunsaulus collection will show you children, and grown-ups too, making little landscapes in trays, writing verses, going on picnics, admiring cherry blossoms, listening to singing insects, collecting shells and practising archery; and besides all these, the Japanese have now learned most of our games, such as basketball, baseball and tennis. With so many entertaining things to do, don't you think that Japanese boys and girls have a very happy life?

DOROTHY COCKRELL, Guide-lecturer.

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FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
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FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Today you are to see a film called "Wild Beasts of Borneo." One of the best known animals of that island is the orang-utan; and story will tell you about him.

D. C. DAVIES, Director.

THE ORANG-UTAN

There are three great man-like apes,—the gorilla, the chimpanzee and the orang-utan. The first two are natives of Africa; the third is found in the islands of Borneo and Sumatra. In the Museum, a group of orangs can be seen near the south end of Hall 22; and the orang's skeleton is in the first case at the east end of Hall 17.

The orang differs very greatly in appearance from the other apes. To begin with, his long hair is entirely auburn in color. He is a real "red-head"; and his shaggy locks cover practically his whole body. Even his black face has a suggestion of a mustache and chin whiskers. Old male orangs have very broad faces. When they are well fed, great layers of fat form on the cheeks in front of the small close-set ears. These layers are usually not more than an inch and a half thick; but, extending out on both sides for three or four inches, they make the orang look like a great round man-in-the-moon. It is possible that this fat is like that in the camel's hump, a reserve supply of food to be absorbed in time of famine.

The orang is further characterized by extremely long arms, a thick body and short legs. The "reach" measured from finger tip to finger tip across his outstretched arms and chest is almost twice the animal's height, from heel to crown. In the Museum group, the old male is four feet six inches tall and he has a reach of eight feet four and one-half inches. The orang's hands and feet, too, are strange. He had used them as hooks in tree climbing for so many generations that even the finger and toe bones have become curved. He cannot put his foot flat on the ground; but must walk on the outside of his foot and the back of his third and fourth toes, supporting most of his weight on the knuckles of his hands. Men who have seen him walking in the forest say that he looks like an old man on crutches.

Although his walking gait is slow, he climbs very rapidly. He can easily swing himself along from branch to branch and tree to tree faster than a man can run. His hook-like grasping feet, his long hands and his strong arms make him a true tree animal. In fact, the orang seldom comes down to the ground at all; and when he does, it is only to get a drink of water or to feed on the juicy palm shoots that grow along the water's edge. When he drinks, he dips his hand into the water and then licks the drops from his knuckles.

For the most part, orangs are very good natured fellows. They have no enemies except man; for they are the most powerful animals to be found in the Borneo jungles. They are very inquisitive; and they often expose themselves to a fatal shot in their effort to find out just what the man who hunts them is trying to do. They are not dangerous to man except when trapped or wounded; but then they fly into fearful rages—roaring, howling and even fighting with hands and teeth.

Orangs do not have real homes; but at night they build a rough platform, three to four feet in diameter, where they sleep lying flat on the back with their hands and feet grasping nearby branches. These beds are usually placed in the lower branches of the trees. There the animals are somewhat protected from the wind and night rains of the tropics. When the weather becomes extremely wet, the orangs cover themselves over with large pandanus or fern leaves. They are not early risers; but wait until the morning sun has somewhat dried the leaves before they begin to stir about.

The orang's day is spent almost entirely in eating; and most of his food is found in the trees. Nuts, fruits, leaves, buds and shoots are all devoured eagerly; and, curiously enough, he prefers unripe fruit. In the Museum model, the orangs are perched in a durian tree, enjoying its fruits. These fruits are eaten by the natives of Borneo as well as by the orangs. Orchards are planted on the mountain slopes which rise above the jungle; and there visits from the orangs are quite unwelcome. Only the natives of one tribe are fond of these great apes. They tell the story of an attack on their village by an enemy tribe. As the enemy approached, large numbers of orangs appeared in the trees, curious at the sight of the newcomers. The enemies, thinking that the orangs were strange inhabitants of the village, grew frightened and ran away; and thus the village was saved. The story, probably, is not true; but most of the people of Borneo do recognize the orang's resemblance to man. Indeed, the Malay name "Orang-utan" means "man of the woods."

DOROTHY COCKRELL, Guide-lecturer.

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One of the best known animals of that island is the orang-utan;
and story will tell you about him.

D. C. DAVIES, Director.

MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

SERIES IV

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APRIL 3, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN
CHICAGO

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

One of the giants of the tree world is the Sequoia. This morning you will see Sequoia trees in the motion pictures; and the story will tell you about them.

D. C. DAVIES, Director.

FOREST GIANTS OF CALIFORNIA

Do you think you would enjoy playing house inside of a hollow tree? Some of thc big trees in California would make excellent apartments. One of them really was used as thc home of an old mountaincer named Smith; and it is still pointed out to travellers as Smith's cabin.

Smith's cabin is one of thousands of forest giants in California and belongs to a tree group known as the Sequoias. When Sequoia trees are very young they look much likc Christmas trees, with wide branches near the base and a tapering top. As they grow older the lower branches drop off, and that is why the large forest Sequoias all have straight trunks bare of branches sometimes for over a hundred feet. Sequoias are thc largest trees in existence.

There are two kinds of Sequoias living, Giant Sequoias or Big Trees like Smith's cabin; and the coast Redwoods. They look very much alike, except that the Big Trees are usually larger with thicker bark than the Redwoods. The wood and bark are reddish-brown. That is how the Redwoods got their name, although the Big Trces really have red wood too. They are conifers, like the Pines and Cypresses, and bear small brown cones at the tips of the higher branches. The Big Tree concs are larger than Redwood cones. Scientists call the Redwoods, "Sequoia sempervirens," (always green) because the needle-like leaves stay green for a long time. The leaves of the Big Trees, however, remain green for even longer.

Sequoias, both Redwoods and Big Trees, have a remarkable history. Centuries ago, before the great ice sheets came down from the north, thousands of large Sequoia trees grew in Europc and Asia and America. All the Sequoias in Europe and Asia wcre destroyed by the cold and buried under masses of icc and snow. Today the only place in the world where the original Sequoias grow is California.

Most of the Big Trees grow in the interior or central parts of California, several thousands of them in private groves and the rest in national parks and preserves. Yosemite, General Grant and Sequoia National Parks contain some famous Big Trees.

Typical Redwoods grow best with plenty of sea fog to provide moisture. That is why they hug the Pacific coast so closely. When the fogs roll in, the moisture is collected by the dense foliage, and comes down in fine rain. Redwoods have a habit of sprouting all around their base. Often the original tree will die and fall and the sprouts, grown to trees, will form a circle with a shallow basin-like center. Woodsmen call thcse depressions "goose nests." Muir Woods, a national forest by gift, contains many coast Redwoods. There are three pieces of a coast Redwood tree in Hall 26, the hall of North American trees. The large section of trunk in the very center of the hall, the round up-turned cross section and the Redwood board, all belong to a tree just half-grown when cut; but it was over eight hundred years old even then.

No one can tell the exact age of a tree until it is cut down; for the only way of determining tree age is to count the annual rings of growth. Look on the cross section for the light and dark rings. Those are the marks that show where the tree stopped its active growth each year. How old do you think the Redwood in Hall 26 might have become if it had been allowed to keep on growing until it died a natural death?

The oldcst Sequoia tree of which scientists have any definite record proved to be 3230 years old, when the rings of the stump were counted. It must have been a strong young tree several hundred years old at the time of King Solomon. The famous General Sherman tree in Sequoia National Park may be even older than that, for it is said to bc the oldest living thing. The United States government has pronounced it to be the biggest tree in the world, measured by the amount of wood it contains. It is 279.9 feet high. That is three times as high as the tallest part of the Field Museum. Its greatest diameter is 36.5 feet; and its circumfcrence at the base is 102.8 feet. Twenty men with arms out-stretched just manage to encircle this remarkable Big Tree.

Many individual Sequoias have been givcn interesting names. One gigantic Big Tree was called "Old Goliath." It crashed to the ground in a terrible storm a number of years ago. "Wawona" is the namc of a well-known Big Trce through the trunk of which has been cut a passage large enough for automobile travel. Other famous Sequoias are the "Sentincls," "Old Hcrcules," the "Canal Boat," and "Noah's Ark."

Although comparatively few Sequoias remain in existence, there is little danger of extinction because they resist disease better than any other trees, and they sprout readily.

MARGARET FISHER, Guide-lecturer.

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MUSEUM STORIES
FOR
CHILDREN

SERIES IV
NUMBER SIX
APRIL 3, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN
CHICAGO

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FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

One of the giants of the tree world is the Sequoia. This morning you will see Sequoia trees in the motion pictures; and the story will tell you about them.

D. C. DAVIES, Director.

MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

SERIES IV

NUMBER SEVEN

APRIL 10, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN
CHICAGO

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

It was necessary to substitute a film called "Birds of Prey" for the one on "Spirit Wrestlers" announced in the program for today. The story, therefore, will tell you about two of our largest hunting-birds.

D. C. Davies, Director.

THE GOLDEN EAGLE AND THE CALIFORNIA CONDOR

A great group of our birds are, like our wild cats and dogs, hunters of live animal food. Hunting-animals are equipped with strong jaws, sharp teeth and, often, claws for holding their prey; and hunting-birds, too, are especially equipped for their life. They have powerful wings for the pursuit of rapidly moving birds and animals, strong curved claws for catching and holding their prey and a hooked beak with sharp cutting edges for devouring their food.

Many birds of prey are shown in the Museum collections. Hawks, falcons, eagles, vultures, ospreys and owls are to be seen in Hall 21; and in Hall 20 are two of the largest and most interesting of all of them—the golden eagle and the California condor.

The golden eagle is known to people all over the world; for it is to be found in almost every continent. The people of Asia, of Africa, of Europe and America have seen it soaring above their cliffs and forests; and wherever it is seen it is a beautiful and majestic bird.

Like most birds of prey, the golden eagle is very wary. Its nest is built high on a hidden ledge of a cliff or mountain side, or, perhaps, if the bird is living in wooded country, in the highest branches of a great tree. The nest is well made. Heavy sticks form its base and it is carefully lined with twigs and grasses. Often the tree nests are from three to seven feet thick.

Usually two eggs are laid and hatched each year; and the eaglets resemble their parents but little. They are covered with soft white down; and, in contrast with it, their black eyes and yellow bills seem much too large. Their feet are very strong and can grasp and hold objects almost as soon as the babies are out of the shell.

They are taught to eat meat from the first; but at the beginning only tender tidbits are given to them; and the parents are careful to include no feathers or bits of fur in their diet. In fact, every bird is plucked and every little animal stripped of its fur before it is brought to the nest. Later, the young eagles learn to eat food that has not been specially prepared—to swallow feathers and fur and even bones.

When the babies are very small, the mother shelters them each night and on stormy days. As they grow older, they are left more and more to themselves; and the parents drop in only occasionally to bring food or to make sure that all is well. The eaglets increase in size; and gradually strong brown feathers begin to sprout through the down which covers them. When they are almost as large as their parents and feathers have replaced the down entirely, the eaglets take their first flying lessons. Standing, they flap their wings for several minutes at a time. Later they learn to half fly, half hop from rock to rock about the nest; and still later they drop from the nest and swoop away in their first real flight. No one has ever seen a mother eagle teaching her young to hunt; but it is possible that she does so just as a mother cat teaches her kittens to catch mice. A full grown golden eagle is easily a match for any animal of its own size.

The California condor is the largest of our North American birds of prey. A full grown condor often weighs twenty pounds and has a wing-spread of nine to eleven feet; but, despite its great size, it is not as powerful as the golden eagle nor is its manner of living the same. If you examine the birds carefully, you will find that, while the eagle has very strong grasping feet with long talons, the condor's feet are weak and its claws, dull. The eagle can swoop down, kill and carry away a small lamb, the condor is unable to kill or carry as small an animal as a squirrel; so, instead of hunting live food, it hunts for dead food—the animals that have already been killed by stronger foes.

Condors nest on ledges or in caves of the highest mountains. But one egg is laid and hatched each year; and the baby, like the eaglet, is at first covered with white down. The down gradually changes from white to grey; and when the condor is about two months old, black feathers begin to appear. The baby remains in the nest until it can fly and during all that time it is fed on food which has first been partially digested in its parent's crop.

When white men first went to the west coast, they found the condor as far north as the Columbia River and as far south as Lower California. Many of the birds were shot simply because their great bodies made good targets. Others were killed by eating poisoned meat which had been placed near mountain pastures in an attempt to protect cattle from the grizzly bears, panthers and coyotes then common. At present there are few condors left and they are to be found in only a few parts of the southern California mountains. It is possible that they may soon follow the passenger pigeon and the great auk to extinction.

DOROTHY COCKRELL, Guide-lecturer.

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MUSEUM STORIES
FOR
CHILDREN

SERIES IV
NUMBER SEVEN
APRIL 10, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN
CHICAGO

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D. C. DAVIES, Director.

MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

SERIES IV
NUMBER EIGHT
APRIL 17, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN
CHICAGO

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

If you were to visit the little explored parts of South America and the islands near its coast, you would see many strange animals. The film, "A Naturalist's Paradise," will show you some of them and the story will tell you about others.

D. C. Davies, Director.

SOME STRANGE SOUTH AMERICAN ANIMALS

Aladdin rubbed his lamp and was transported into strange lands where unfamiliar creatures lived. We might believe that we too had rubbed Aladdin's lamp if we should visit some parts of South America and see the strange animals living there, many of them unlike any other creatures in the world.

Sloths are found only in tropical America. They look a good deal like monkeys because of their hairy bodies and long legs; but instead of hands they have long curved claws. With their hook-like claws they hang back downward from the trees, staying in one place all day. At night-fall the sloths swing themselves slowly about, picking leaves with their lips and swallowing the food practically whole. Sloths have only a few peg-like teeth.

These stupid creatures cannot fight even in self defense. Perhaps that is why nature has provided them with ways to hide from enemies. One good method of hiding is that of hanging motionless among the leafy branches; and in addition, their hairy bodies become covered, when adult, with tiny green plants. These plant forms or algae grow as parasites and dry up when the animals die. That is why mounted specimens of sloths never appear green.

Look in the fourth case at the southeast end of Hall 15, for the sloths hanging from branches. The best known kind of sloth is the "tardo" which has only two toes or claws on each fore foot. Another sloth, the "unau," is three-toed; and both kinds have three toes on each hind foot. Sloths spend almost their entire life-time in trees; and they are practically helpless on the ground.

Anteaters are related to sloths but instead of a few teeth, they have none at all. One anteater acts much like a sloth, climbing about in the tree tops at night. This is the silky two-toed anteater which is about the size of a rat. It uses its tail as an extra limb to help in climbing. Unlike the common antcater, this species seems to like eating wasp grubs better than ants. There is a silky anteater from Brazil near the sloths, in Hall 15.

The largest anteater in South America also lives in Brazil. It is called the great anteater or ant-bear. It is shaggy like a bear and walks flat-footed on its hind feet. Its fore feet, however, have long curved claws which are always bent under in walking. The fore paws are useful chiefly in tearing open ant nests. Sometimes the great antcater is forced to use these powerful tearing claws in defending itself against animal or human enemies.

This large creature lives almost wholly on ants. Its long sticky tongue catches ants like fly paper. The great anteater is not at all like the silky anteater; for it never climbs trees and it cannot grasp with its tail. Its tail, however is remarkable for its immense size. It seems useful mainly to protect the animal when asleep, by keeping away insects and shedding rain. A large Brazilian ant-eater and a smaller Mexican variety of the same species are placed between the sloths and the silky anteater in the exhibition case.

The armadillo is another strange South American animal related distantly to sloths and ant-eaters. It also has peg-like teeth but they are much more numerous. The most peculiar part of an armadillo is the heavy coat of armor which it wears as a protecting outer shell. Its back and sometimes its head and tail are covered with many small bony plates which grow out of the skin. They begin growth as true bone but are later covered with a horny outer layer. Hairs grow between the rows of plates.

Most armadillos can bend themselves easily, since their armor is not in one solid piece. One kind of armadillo can roll itself into a tight ball with head and tail hidden. Dogs may toss them about like playthings but cannot hurt them unless they unroll. When their enemies have stopped teasing them, these little fellows relax the strong muscles which held them in ball-shape, and trot away to their burrows. Most armadillos hide by burrowing rapidly into the ground.

The kind of armadillo most common in South America and Mexico and the only kind which lives in the United States is known as the nine-banded peba. Its bony plates grow across its back in nine rows or bands. Although there are still many of these animals, their flesh is so good to eat and their shells make such curious ornaments that it may be necessary soon to protect them.

There are several kinds of armadillos in the same case in which you found the sloths and anteaters in Hall 15. Look for the tiny creatures with soft white hair showing like cotton under the bony armor. It is one of the smallest armadillos.

If you hunt in cases nearby you will find other strange South American animals; llamas, an alpaca, a vicugna, and a capybara.

MARGARET FISHER, Guide-lecturer.

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MUSEUM STORIES
FOR
CHILDREN

SERIES IV
NUMBER EIGHT
APRIL 17, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN
CHICAGO

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If you were to visit the little explored parts of South America and the islands near its coast, you would see many strange animals. The film, "A Naturalist's Paradise," will show you some of them and the story will tell you about others.

D. C. DAVIES, Director.

MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

SERIES IV

NUMBER NINE

APRIL 24, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN
CHICAGO

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

To northern eyes, tropical birds seem very strange. The story will tell you about some interesting ones from Borneo.

D. C. DAVIES, Director.

BIRDS OF BORNEO

Have you ever stopped short in a hike through the woods just to listen to the noises of the out-of-doors? Perhaps you have been startled by the sudden cry of an unfamiliar bird. Travellers in the forested jungles of Borneo, far from railroads, are startled sometimes by loud noises which sound very much like the approach of a train. Such a noise usually proves to be the flapping of the wings of a certain large bird, making its way among the tree tops.

Native Malay people call the bird "burong n'gam" because its loud repeated call sounds like this: "n'gam-gok, n'gam-gok". English speaking people have named the bird Hornbill because of its strange appearance. All Hornbills have very large bills and most of them have, in addition, a large growth on the head, just above and partly on the bill. This casque or helmet looks almost like a second bill, but the birds do not seem to have any use for this peculiar growth. Most Hornbills are fortunate in having hollow bills and casques, so that the burden is not great. In one group of Hornbills the resemblance to the nose-horn of a rhinoceros accounts for the name, Rhinoceros Hornbill. Hornbills have strong eyelashes,—a rare development among birds.

The nesting habits of Bornean Hornbills are odd indeed. A pair of adults select a tree trunk which has a hollow in it fifteen or twenty feet above the ground. The female goes into the hole; and the male proceeds to wall up the entrance with mud, leaving a slit just wide enough so that his mate can poke out the tip of her bill to receive the food he brings. She remains a prisoner in the tree for six or eight weeks. During that time the eggs are laid and hatched and the baby birds develop their feathers. Newly hatched Hornbills are naked and helpless; but it does not take them long to grow large and very fat.

All the time the mother and babies are imprisoned, the father bird is kept busy getting enough food for his hungry family. Luckily for him, Hornbills are not too particular in their diet. Fruits, nuts, and berries are their chief food; but insects, plant roots, eggs and small animals are often eaten in addition. The male Hornbill has a queer way of feeding his mate. Instead of carrying each bit of food to her in his bill he swallows it; and in the gizzard a skin sac grows around the food. When a sac is fully formed the male Hornbill flies to his mate and coughs it up into her bill. She, in turn, feeds the nestlings. Enough food is contained in one sac to last the female for a day or more; and so the male is not forced to give away the secret of her hiding place by visiting it too often. After weeks in cramped quarters it is not surprising that female Hornbills are unable to fly and can hardly stand up.

At the west end of Hall 21 you can find a pair of Rhinoceros Hornbills at their nest. Notice the tip of the mother bird's bill poked out for food; and see the huge reddish helmet on the father bird's head. Why some Hornbills habitually wall themselves up in prisons is a puzzle. Perhaps they need protection from monkeys and other jungle animals during the nesting season. Two smaller Bornean Hornbills, the Gray-tailed and the White-fronted, can be seen in Case 197, nearby. Hornbills are among the largest birds to be found in the jungles of Borneo.

There are a number of Bornean birds which live almost entirely on the ground. Some of the most beautiful in plumage are the Fire-backed Pheasants. The patch of glossy red feathers on their back has earned for the birds their name. Pheasants are much like domestic chickens; but this kind is so shy that little is known of its habits. They spend the heat of the day hidden in the shade of dense jungle undergrowth, coming out in small parties toward evening to feed on berries, leaves and insects. They scratch in dirt like chickens and are fond of dusting themselves.

A ground-loving bird quite different in family, habits and size is the little Pitta. It is about the size of a robin and has long legs and a very short tail. Its feathers are glossy. Pittas are excellent runners and when disturbed, they disappear like magic into the jungle. They build large dome-shaped nests on the ground or in low bushes. Worms, snails and insects are their favorite food. Two beautiful Pittas can be found in Case 197, Hall 21.

The Coucal is another insect-eating bird of Borneo. The huge globe-shaped nest with its side entrance is often found in rice fields. A Coucal is a kind of Cuckoo. You can see one of them in Case 196. Notice how very long and straight the hind claws are. That is one of the chief differences between Coucals and ordinary Cuckoos.

The Drongo is another common Bornean bird. You can see a large Racket-tailed Drongo in a case near the Pittas and Hornbills. Some say that it is the best singing bird of the East. Drongos feed entirely on insects, catching much of their prey on the wing. In addition to Hornbills, Pheasants, Pittas, Coucals and Drongos, you can find many other foreign birds if you look on the south side of Hall 21.

MARGARET FISHER, Guide-lecturer.

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MUSEUM STORIES
FOR
CHILDREN

SERIES IV
NUMBER NINE
APRIL 24, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN
CHICAGO

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D. C. DAVIES, Director.

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

SERIES IV

NUMBER TEN

MAY 1, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN

CHICAGO

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

A few weeks ago, a story told you about the orang-utan of Borneo. Today the story will tell you of some of the orang's smaller tree neighbors.

D. C. Davies, Director.

TREE ANIMALS OF BORNEO

Borneo is an island of forests and rivers. Its great trees with tangled vines and bushes at their base form a dense jungle; and during the rainy season, much of the country turns to soggy swamp. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of Borneo's mammals should live almost entirely in the trees—deserting the damp ground for dry and sunny tree tops.

Four interesting tree animals are the Bornean gibbon, the proboscis monkey, the Bornean slow lemur and the tarsier. All of these animals belong, along with man, to the primate group; and all of them may be seen in the Museum collections.

The gibbon, to be seen at the west end of Hall 15, is placed by scientists in that class of primates which includes the chimpanzee, gorilla and orang-utan. A glimpse of its long legs and arms, slender body and grasping fingers and toes, will show you how well fitted it is for its tree life. In moving from branch to branch and tree to tree, it swings itself along by its arms, grasping the branches above its head just as an acrobat at the circus grasps his trapeze. It can move along, hand over hand, so rapidly that it is said to look as if it were flying. It is probable that the gibbon eats almost anything it can find in the trees,—fruit, leaves, insects, birds, bird-eggs, lizards and spiders. Its most famous quality is its voice. During the twilight hours of early morning and late evening, the whole forest resounds with the calls of hundreds of gibbons. Indeed, this habit has given the animal its native name and the one adopted by many travelers in the islands. It is called the "Wah-wah".

The proboscis monkey has the strangest face of all the monkeys. A proboscis is a long snout or nose; and this monkey is gifted with one large enough for an animal three times its size. When a proboscis monkey is young, it has a saucy upturned or "pug" nose. As the animal grows older, its nose grows longer and in old monkeys, it sometimes hangs below the chin. In addition to long arms and legs, proboscis monkeys have long tails; but, unlike those of South American monkeys, the tails cannot be coiled about a branch or used to hold objects. It is possible that they aid in balancing the body as the animals climb about; but otherwise they are quite useless. Proboscis monkeys usually go about in rather large companies; and the Museum group near the south end of Hall 22 shows you such a company resting and sunning themselves in the top of pongyet tree. In the eyes of the Malay natives these pink-faced monkeys resemble white men; and their name for them means "the Dutchman".

Both the gibbon and the proboscis monkey are abroad during the day and sleep at night. Their smaller relative, the Bornean slow lemur or lory (Hall 15) reverses matters. It sleeps all day, rolled up in a ball. At dusk it awakens; and all through the night it prowls slowly from tree to tree eating leaves, shoots, fruit, insects, bird-eggs and young birds. Like other night prowlers, it has very large eyes and soft fur. The great eyes enable it to see in the dark and the soft, thick fur deadens the sound of its movements when it stalks its prey. It climbs slowly and cautiously, never releasing a safe branch with its feet until it has tested and firmly grasped the next branch with its hands. The natives of Borneo believe many strange things about the slow lemur. They say that if a sailing vessel has one on board, it will never be becalmed. When the lemur is awakened during the day and hides its face in its hands to keep the bright light from its eyes, the Borneans say that it is seeing ghosts.

The tarsier, to be seen near the slow lemur in Hall 15, is also active at night; and it is far more active than the lemur. If you were to see it hopping across the ground you would say, "That looks like a little kangaroo"; for the tarsier moves by leaps just as the kangaroo does. Its hind legs are very long and strong; and its tufted tail serves to balance it in its long jumps. The gibbon, proboscis monkey and slow lemur all have grasping hands and feet to use in climbing. The tarsier climbs by the use of small, flat discs of flesh on the ends of its slender fingers and toes. The suction caused by pressing them against a flat surface holds the little animal on the branches and trunks of the trees it frequents. The tarsier's home is a hole in a tree or a cranny beneath its roots; and its favorite foods are insects and lizards. The lemur is an omen of good luck to the Borneans; but they dread the sight of the little tarsier. If it visits a rice field, they say, some misfortune is sure to befall the owner.

DOROTHY COCKRELL, Guide-lecturer.

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MUSEUM STORIES
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CHILDREN

SERIES IV
NUMBER TEN
MAY 1, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN
CHICAGO

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D. C. DAVIES, Director.

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

SERIES IV

NUMBER ELEVEN

MAY 8, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN
CHICAGO

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Many school children who visit the Museum ask to see the fuel exhibits in the Department of Geology. The story today will tell you a little about two fuels.

D. C. Davies, Director.

PEAT AND COAL AS FUEL

People in Ireland warm themselves on chilly days before a fire of peat sods. Peat has been the favorite fuel in that country for many years. Some of you, no doubt, are wondering what peat is. It looks like hardened brown dirt with bits of plant roots mixed all through; and it really is vegetable matter partly decayed in swamp mud.

This is the story of how peat is formed. Wet marshlands are covered with many different swamp growths. Some of the plants are like sea-weeds and grow entirely under water. Besides these, there are floating plants such as water lilies. Then there are rushes and sedges; and nearer dry land are grasses, moss, heath and shrubs. Bordering all this vegetation and sometimes growing among the shrubs and grasses tamarack trees (somewhat like Christmas trees) are often found. During summer-time all vegetation grows rapidly. In the autumn and winter months much of it dies, and the part above water begins to decay. Although swamp water largely prevents the decay of the plants beneath its surface, these also change gradually. Parts of the plants disappear in the form of gas; but the solid element carbon remains and forms about half of the vegetable mass called peat. It becomes a part of the mud which forms a bog. Peat bogs grow rapidly, adding from one to four inches a year. An old bog is usually from 10 to 20 feet deep.

Do you know that there are peat bogs almost in Chicago? Along the Desplaines river, in the Skokie valley and in the marshlands just southeast, near Gary, Indiana, are many peat bogs. Perhaps you have seen them without knowing that they were peat bogs. That is because peat bogs usually look very much like an ordinary swamp on the top. The surface layer of a peat bog never burns well on account of the large percentage of green plant life in it. Such peat, although poor fuel, makes good fertilizer and bedding for live stock. In Hall 36 you can see the model of a peat bog. Notice that the green swamp vegetation is future peat and the brown mud under the water is peat ready to be dug up for fuel.

In Ireland peat sod or turf is cut into blocks a trifle larger than an ordinary building brick and used in a fireplace or stove instead of coal. In some parts of the country the old methods of hand labor are still employed. The upper layer is removed for fertilizer or bedding; and the next layer of vegetable mud is cut into slanting pieces, with a winged or double spade. Hundreds of such sods are stacked, on high ground, like building blocks and left to dry in the sun. By the end of two months the dried and shrunk peat blocks are ready for use as fuel.

In some peat bogs the vegetable mud is removed by machinery. Then it is packed tightly into iron pipes or other moulds, pressed hard and dried. Sometimes the peat sod is mixed with coal dust in order to produce better fuel. These hard cakes are called briquettes and take the place of coal to some extent. In northern and western Europe peat has been used commonly as fuel since ancient times; and it seems to be as popular as ever, especially in Germany. It is being used as fuel to some extent in the United States and in Canada. There are many marshes, swamps and bogs in North America, in Europe and in the cooler parts of Asia from which raw peat can be obtained for fuel and other purposes.

Peat is not nearly as satisfactory as coal for fuel. It does not burn as well because of moisture, and more of it must be used because of the smaller amount of carbon. In a table case near the peat bog model in Hall 36 there are some briquettes and other forms of peat fuel. The next case contains several examples of different uses for peat, such as paper pulp and cardboard, packing and bagging.

Coal, the common fuel, was formed in the same way as peat except that much of the original plant life was larger and more woody; and practically all of the coal being mined today was formed ages ago, before there were any people on the earth. Heat and pressure helped in transforming that ancient peaty substance into hard blackened masses, containing much carbon. Coal, thus formed, was covered with mud and sand which gradually hardened into solid rock. A difference in conditions of formation causes various kinds of coal. Lignite or brown coal contains less carbon than any other. It is not popular because it does not burn very well. Bituminous or soft coal averages 75% to 80% carbon; and it burns with a good deal of smoke. Anthracite or hard coal contains the most carbon, from 80% to 90%; and it burns with very little smoke. You can find lumps of lignite, bituminous coal and anthracite in several cases at the east end of Hall 36. A model of a bituminous coal mine is shown near the cases in which you found the coal. It illustrates typical shaft mining; the coal from such mines is found hundreds of feet below the surface of the ground.

Until the time of the Crusades people did not know that coal could be used as fuel; and they burned wood and peat instead. The discovery of coal fuel caused great changes. The invention of the steam engine made it a necessity; and today we cannot get along without it. There are hundreds of coal products as well as the original fuel, today. In a case at the east end of Hall 36 you can see some of them, from gas to delicate dyes and chemicals.

MARGARET FISHER, Guide-lecturer.

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FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Many school children who visit the Museum ask to see the fuel exhibits in the Department of Geology. The story today will tell you a little about two fuels.

D. C. DAVIES, Director.

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MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

SERIES IV
NUMBER ELEVEN
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FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN
CHICAGO

MUSEUM STORIES FOR CHILDREN

SERIES IV

NUMBER TWELVE

MAY 15, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN
CHICAGO

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Most children like to go fishing; and they are content to seek the small and easily caught fish. The story will tell you about a number of them.

D. C. Davies, Director.

THE FISH THAT CHILDREN CATCH

Have you gone fishing this year? If you have, perhaps you have caught little, round, spotted fish, long thin, silvery fish and plump green and yellow ones; but do you know even their names? The Museum is a very good place to find out all about them.

Many of the fish caught by boys and girls are the little round fellows we know as sunfish. There are a number of different kinds of sunfish to be found in and near Chicago; and perhaps the most popular of all is the pumpkin-seed or sunny. These fish grow to a length of eight inches; but most of those that reach a boy's string are not more than four or five inches long. What the pumpkin-seed lacks in size is made up in color; for it is one of our most beautiful fish. The green of its back shades into a delicate blue on its sides and the blue, in turn, blends with the orange-yellow of its stomach. Its cheeks are orange streaked with blue; a dot of bright scarlet marks the lower part of the gill cover; and scattered all over its body are orange-red spots. The pumpkin-seed can be caught in nearly all clear brooks, ponds and lagoons; and it will bite on almost any kind of bait.

As well known as the pumpkin-seed, but far more important as a food fish, is the bluegill. It, too, belongs to the sunfish family and has the round, flattened body and shiny scales characteristic of that group. The bluegill's body shades from dark green above to light green or white below; and the delicate blue of its gill covers and cheeks gives it its name. On each side near the head is a spot of rich, velvety black. Bluegills are the largest of the sunfish. They sometimes reach a length of fourteen inches and a weight of one and one-half pounds. The best place to fish for them is off the edge of a sandbar where there is a patch of water weeds. The fish go in rather large groups or schools and where one is caught there are almost sure to be others. The best baits for them are angleworms and grasshoppers; but they will take many other kinds.

A third plentiful sunfish in the smaller lakes and streams near Chicago is the rock bass. Like the bluegill, it lives among the plants found in clear, cool water or hides among the stones of rocky bottoms. Some boys call it red-eye or goggle-eye because it has large red eyes. Its body is light green banded by darker green streaks. In the spring, the father fish can often be seen near gravel or sand bars. There he hollows out a nest and, after the mother fish has deposited her eggs, remains near it protecting the eggs until they are hatched. Any kind of bait may be used in fishing for the rock bass; but it seems to relish small minnows, grubs and angleworms more than anything else.

Two other sunfish which you may catch are the warmouth and the green sunfish. The warmouth has red eyes like those of the rock bass; but it is much darker in general color and its scales are often tinged with red. It is found in shallow, mud-bottomed streams and lakes and its flesh is apt to have a muddy flavor. The green sunfish is a beauty. Most of its scales are marked with a sky blue spot edged with gold; and, at a distance, these colors blend to a bright, brassy green. Its sides are sprinkled with dark spots and its cheeks are striped with narrow blue lines. Like the other sunfish, it can be caught readily with angleworm bait. It is not an important food-fish; for it never weighs more than four or five ounces.

One of the finest fish of the Chicago area and one as easily caught as any of the sunfish is the yellow perch. It is valued by older fishermen as well as younger ones; for it grows to a length of fourteen inches and a weight of two pounds and it is an excellent food fish. The yellow perch's body is longer and narrower than that of a sunfish. Its back is green, its sides are yellow and its stomach is usually white. The upper fins are green and the lower fins, red or orange. The perch bites on almost any sort of bait in practically all of the lakes of our region.

From the piers and docks jutting out into Lake Michigan, many lake herrings are caught each spring and fall. The herrings spend their winter and summer in deep water where they are caught in nets by commercial fishermen. In the spring and fall, they come in to shallow water and there may be caught with hook and line. They are slender, silvery fish and resemble somewhat their large and important relative, the whitefish, although their own weight seldom exceeds two pounds.

The sunfish, perch and herring all wear an armor of shining scales. Bullheads are protected only by their tough skin. Their large head, wide mouth, curious barbels or whiskers and their dull color make them the homeliest of our fish; but they are, none the less, the favorites of many young fishermen. Perhaps it is because they are plentiful in almost every pond, small lake, water-filled quarry and sluggish stream and because they usually hook themselves firmly when they take the bait.

Most of these common fish may be seen in Albert W. Harris Hall (Hall 18). Hunt for them among the freshwater game fish, the Chicago market fish and in their family groups.

DOROTHY COCKRELL, Guide-lecturer.

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FOR
CHILDREN

SERIES IV

NUMBER TWELVE

MAY 15, 1926

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NUMBER THIRTEEN

MAY 22, 1926

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

ROOSEVELT ROAD AND LAKE MICHIGAN

CHICAGO

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Silk was a gift of the Far East to the West. The story will tell you a little about its history and manufacture.

D. C. DAVIES, Director.

THE ORIGIN OF SILK

At the time Columbus lived, many Europeans were seeking new trade routes to Asia and the far East. Merchant ships sailed the seas and caravans travelled slowly over desert and mountain, bringing home spices, precious gems and many other strange foreign luxuries.

Among the fine things from the East displayed in European markets were beautiful fabrics woven with soft bright threads and dyed in lovely colors. Silks imported from Persia were sold in Mediterranean ports soon after Alexander the Great conquered Persia. The Persians and Syrians obtained their silks from the Chinese; for China is the original home of the domesticated silkworm culture. When Europeans first saw the lovely silken fabrics, they had no idea of what they were made. Some believed that silk must be very fine wool or cotton. Others thought it came from a kind of fluffy down which grew on trees. Although silk culture had been carried on for centuries in Asia, it was not until the sixth century of our era that people in Europe learned the real origin of silk.

Two monks travelling in China discovered that the natives were raising small caterpillars which spun soft light cocoons; and that thread made from those cocoons was woven into silk cloth. On their return, the monks told the Byzantine emperor Julianus of their discovery; and they were sent back immediately to get some silkworm eggs so that Europeans also might raise silk. Silk culture was successful in southern Europe; and it remains to this day an important industry, especially in Italy and France. The largest silk industry in the world, however, has always been in Asia, with China and Japan in the lead.

According to tradition, in 2700 B.C. the wife of a Chinese emperor discovered the usefulness of cocoons, and she was the first person in the world to raise silkworms for the purpose of making silk fabrics. Later she was deified and worshipped as the goddess of silk. Because of that famous empress, it became the custom in China for empresses and their court ladies to care for silkworms and to superintend weaving. At the present time silk culture is one of the leading industries in China, keeping thousands of men, women and children busy caring for the silkworms, preparing the silk and weaving cloth.

Common domestic silkworms have lived in captivity for so many centuries that they are practically helpless unless people care for them and feed them. After the silkworm eggs have been deposited in the spring, they are saved and carefully protected through the following winter. Early the next spring the eggs hatch and the tiny caterpillars begin to eat immediately. They are fed regular meals of their favorite food, mulberry leaves. When the silkworms are very small, they are fed every hour or two with young and tender leaves cut up in fine pieces. As they grow larger, they are fed less often but the meals consist of larger and older mulberry leaves. The caterpillars grow rapidly, eating constantly until they are ready to moult or shed their outer skin. Sometimes the moulting period is called a sleep because the caterpillars stop eating and stay very quiet, while a new skin is forming underneath the one which they have just outgrown. When they "wake up," they wriggle out of the old skin head first, and begin once more to eat heartily. There are four "sleeps" and five periods of activity called "ages."

At the end of the fifth age the full-grown silkworms stop eating and crawl up into bushes where they spin their cocoons. Each one moves its head in such a way that the silken strands coming from the "spinneret" on its underlip gradually enclose the creature in a cocoon. It spins a long thread, wrapping the silk around its body until it is completely hidden. Then the caterpillar inside the cocoon sheds its skin once more; draws itself into compact rounded shape; and is soon covered with glossy almost transparent skin. This is the chrysalid stage in its development, when the caterpillar is gradually becoming a moth. For nearly a month the chrysalis seems dead; yet all the time it is developing wings and antennae and all other moth characteristics. As soon as it is fully developed, the moth breaks the silk strands in the top of the cocoon, spreads its wings and goes in search of a mate.

The silk manufacturers are intent on securing perfect cocoons with unbroken threads. It is necessary, therefore, to destroy most of the chrysalids before they have made their escape as moths. For this reason the cocoons are gathered soon after the silkworms have finished spinning; but a certain number of moths are allowed to escape every year so that they may lay the silkworm eggs for the next year's hatching.

You will find a silkworm exhibit near the west end of Hall 19. In it you can trace the life of a silkworm from egg to moth; you can see, in pictures, how the Japanese carry on the silk industry; and you can see how disease affects silkworms. At the north end of Hall 24, Case 34, there are two sets of pictures, showing how the Chinese carry on silk culture.

MARGARET FISHER, Guide-lecturer.

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The program today is the last one of this Spring's course. Next Autumn the entertainments are to take you on a trip around the world.

D. C. Davies, Director.

SPICES

An old rhyme describes little girls as made of sugar and spice and everything nice. Spice is popular throughout the civilized world; and a lively trade in spices has continued since ancient times. The Pharaohs of Egypt sent expeditions into far countries to seek spices and rare gums for the preparation of mummies. The traders who purchased Joseph from his brethren were bearing rare spices from the East to be sold in Egyptian markets.

In the middle ages the demand for spices caused much rivalry and warfare among European nations, many contending for control of the "Spice Islands" of the far East. When Columbus lived, Aleppo, in Turkey, was the great trading center between East and West. A search for new trade routes resulted in the discovery of more "Spice Islands," the West Indies of tropical America. Spices not native to America were introduced and soon rivalled the Asiatic products. Although the greatest center of spice trade is still in the East, with the island city of Singapore leading the world in exports, West Indian spice trade flourishes today especially in Jamaica.

Spices are plant products. Some spices, such as nutmeg, are the fruit of trees; others, such as cinnamon, are the bark; and at least one, ginger, is the root of a plant. Many merchants ship the spices without reducing them to powder; but by the time they reach our homes most spices are ground and ready for a shaker.

Ginger, which we know so well in ginger ale and ginger snaps, is the root of the Zingiber plant which grows in almost all warm countries. It is said that Marco Polo saw the ginger plant growing in China about the year 1280 A. D., and the Chinese called it gingi. The parts of the ginger plant above ground look like our common iris or flag; and the roots are large, spongy and yellowish. After the flowers have blossomed the roots are dug up and cut into pieces. Ginger from Jamaica is considered especially good because it is whiter than most ginger. Calcutta, in India, exports more ginger than any other city in the world. You will find some members of the ginger family in the northwest end of Hall 29. Notice particularly the tray containing slices of Jamaica ginger.

There is a tree the name of which means "sweet smelling;" and it bears two fragrant spices, nutmeg and mace. The fruits look very much like apricots; but the fleshy part around the seed is too dry and leathery to eat. When the fruit is ripe, it bursts open, disclosing a bright red net-like membrane stretched over a brown shell. Inside the thin shell is hidden a brown kernel; and this is the nutmeg. Sometimes the nutmegs are sent to market in their shells; but more frequently they come without their shells and covered with lime for protection from insects and to prevent sprouting. People often buy nutmeg kernels and grate them at home, since powdered nutmeg loses some of its flavor.

The red membrane between the outer husk and the nutmeg shell is the spice known as mace. Mace is usually removed by hand from the nutmeg and is dried until its color changes to golden brown. Although they are parts of the same plant, mace and nutmeg have a different flavor The greatest nutmeg plantations in the world are in the Banda Islands of the East. There are some fine gardens, however, in the West Indies. One splendid tree in Jamaica bears over 4,000 nutmegs every year. On the east side of Hall 29, near the center, you can find a branch of the nutmeg tree with flowers and ripe fruit on it. The shelf below contains trays of nutmeg kernels and dried mace.

It is said that the most beautiful of all known trees is the clove tree, a native of the Molucca Islands in the East. Its pink flowers grow in clusters at the ends of the branches, surrounded by many leaves. The whole tree smells of cloves, although the flowers are the only parts used as spice. Cloves are flower buds with petals folded snugly in a tight ball on top of a long flower base. Hidden inside the flower base or calyx are the seeds. If the flowers are allowed to go to seed before they are gathered they lose their flavor and must be used for producing more clove trees instead of spice. At the southwest end of Hall 29 there are some members of the clove family. Most of them have the perfume or flavor of cloves, although their flower buds are not all useful as spice. One tray contains true cloves.

One of the most valuable spices comes from the bark of the cinnamon tree. It is the hardiest of any of the spice trees and grows best in the island of Ceylon. It is said to have been the first spice sought in early Oriental voyages. Bible history records cinnamon as a favorite spice among the ancient Hebrews. Roman historians told strange stories concerning the much desired spice. According to one tale some large birds carried sticks of cinnamon from India to Arabia and built their nests of them. The Arabs were supposed to have destroyed the nests and sold the cinnamon in foreign markets.

The cinnamon tree belongs to a large family called the Laurels. The entire tree contains the flavor of cinnamon. A case on the east side of Hall 29, near the center, contains several members of this family; and at the southwest end of Hall 28 you will find other Laurels. Look for long strips of cinnamon bark. If you hunt in Halls 25, 28 and 29 you will find several other plants useful for adding flavor to food.

MARGARET FISHER, Guide-lecturer.

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